

Section 1: For All Commercial Drivers

BEFORE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR CDL...

1. Prepare for your Test!

- Knowledge test can be taken at any full-service Driver License Station.
- You will not have to study this entire manual – see the inside front cover for a guide.
- Allow yourself plenty of time for your tests: at least one hour for the General Knowledge test, and an additional 20-30 minutes for each other test. Try to arrive as early in the day as possible.
- Stations have different operating schedules, so check ahead of time to see when they close.
- If you need an oral test, please call first for an appointment.

2. Obtain Your D.O.T. Medical Card

- All drivers applying for a CDL license must have a current, valid medical card before they are allowed to renew, get a duplicate, take a test or in any way proceed with the CDL process.
- The only exceptions are drivers who are employed by government entities and not needing the school bus endorsement. These drivers will have a restriction code added to their CDL, restricting them to government vehicles.

3. Call a CDL Station for An Appointment for Your Skills Test

As a courtesy to other drivers – keep your appointment! Or call to cancel at least 24 hours in advance, if you must.

- You must provide your own vehicle.
- Vehicle must be of same class as the license you need, and must be empty.
- Allow 1 to 2 hours for your skills test.
- If you cancel your appointment less than 24 hours in advance, you will be placed at the end of the waiting list for future appointments.

4. Be sure to Bring With You:

- Any and all driver licenses and state-issued ID's.
- Verification of your social security number (ideally, the social security card itself; or any of the following which shows both the name and SSN: W-2 forms, a computer-generated pay stub or bank statement, or health insurance card).
- Your current valid medical card (see above).
- If you need the School Bus endorsement, your "2-C" form (or, if you will be working for a private school, you'll need to have a letter on school letterhead which contains the "2-C" information).

5. Fees for Common, Basic CDL's (Issued for 5 years):

NOTE: The length of your license is determined by the "Drive for Five" law – it may actually be from 3 to 7 years, depending upon when your next birthday evenly divisible by 5 is.

- Class A: \$46 (\$6 non-refundable application fee plus \$40 license fee).
- Class B or C: \$41 (\$6 non-refundable application fee plus \$35 license fee).
- Add \$2.50 for each endorsement you require, plus \$18.50 for motorcycle class.

Section 1: Introduction

There is a federal requirement that each state have minimum standards for the licensing of commercial drivers. This manual provides driver license testing information for drivers who wish to have a commercial driver license (CDL). This manual does NOT provide information on all the federal and state requirements needed before you can drive a commercial motor vehicle (CMV). For a current update, see Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 55, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

You must have a CDL to operate a vehicle which:

- has a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) over 26,000 pound, inclusive of a towed unit with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 10,000 pound, or
- is a straight vehicle with a GVWR over 26,000 pounds, or
- is designed to transport more than 15 passengers including the driver or
- is of any size and is transporting hazardous materials in an amount that requires placarding under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, or
- is of any size and is used as a school bus.

Tip: GVWR = “loaded,” Usually there is a tag with this information on the inside driver’s door. On trailers, it might be on the front. Otherwise, it should at least be on registration papers.

To get a CDL, you must pass knowledge and skill tests. This manual will help you pass the tests. Figure 1.1 on the inside cover provides a guide to the classes of CDL and the tests.

This Section Explains

- **Tests**
- **Qualifications**
- **How To Apply**
- **Other CDL Rules**
- **Where To Apply**

You will have to take one or more knowledge test, depending on what class of license and what endorsements you need. The CDL knowledge tests include:

- The general knowledge test, taken by all applicants.
- The air brakes test, which you must take if your vehicle has air brakes.
- The combination vehicles test, which is required if you want to drive combination vehicles, such as tractor-trailers.
- The passenger transport test, taken by all bus driver applicants.
- The school bus test taken by all school bus driver applicants.
- The hazardous materials test, required if you want to haul hazardous material or waste in amounts which require placarding.
- The tanker test, required if you want to drive a vehicle designed to haul 1,000 gallons (or more) of liquids in bulk.
- The doubles/triples test, required if you want to pull double or triple trailers.

1.1 Commercial Driver License Tests

- **Knowledge Test**

Skills Test

In addition to the required knowledge test(s), there are three types of general skills that will be tested: pre-trip inspection, basic vehicle control, and on-road driving. **You must take these tests in the type of vehicle for which you wish to be licensed.**

Pre-trip Vehicle Inspection. You will be tested to see if you know whether your vehicle is safe to drive. You may be asked to do a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle and explain to the examiner what you would inspect and why. Section 10 of this manual tells you what to inspect and how to inspect it.

Basic Vehicle Control. You will be tested on your skill to control the vehicle. You will be asked to move your vehicle forward, backward, and turn it within a defined area. These areas may be marked with traffic lanes, cones, barriers, or something similar. The examiner will tell you how each control test is to be done. Section 11 of this manual explains more about this test.

On-road Test. You will be tested on your skills to safely drive your vehicle in a variety of traffic situations. The situations may include left and right turns, intersections, railway crossings, curves, up and down grades, single or multi-lane roads, streets, or highways. The examiner will tell you where to drive. Section 12 of this manual explains more about this test.

1.2 Qualifications

To apply for a CDL in the State of Tennessee, you must meet all of the qualifications described below.

1. You must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. **EXCEPTIONS:** if you operate a vehicle solely intrastate and within 100 miles of job, and your vehicle requires no special endorsements, you may obtain a Class A or B license at age nineteen (19). You may obtain a Class B license at age eighteen (18) if you meet these same requirements.
2. You must not currently be under a driver license suspension, cancellation, or revocation in this or any other state.
3. You must have a valid, current medical card. The only exceptions are drivers employed by government entities (except school buses).
4. Be sure to bring proof of citizenship or lawful permanent residence. Refer to: www.tennesseeanytime.org.

- **Exemptions**

EXEMPTIONS FROM COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE.
The following drivers are not required to obtain a CDL:

1. Farmers or nurserymen transporting agricultural products, farm machinery or farm supplies to or from a farm or nursery, as long as the vehicle is operated within 150 miles of the farm or nursery, and is not used as a common or contract motor carrier.
2. Operators of emergency vehicles.
3. Military personnel.
4. Operators of recreational vehicles.
5. Operators of vehicles leased strictly to transport personal possessions for non-business purposes.

In order to get a learner permit for a CDL, applicants must meet the same qualifications as for a full CDL, and pass all knowledge tests required for the vehicle they intend to operate.

Learner permits are issued for 12 months from the date of issuance, and cost \$14 for a Class PA, or \$13 for a Class PB or PC – plus \$2.50 for each endorsement. The permit will be added to the license a driver already has, which will more than likely have a different expiration date.

For example, someone with a Class D license expiring in July 2002 adds a PA to the license in October 1998. This driver will then have a Class DPA. The expiration date for the license itself remains unchanged, but the permit will expire October, 1999.

Drivers with a learner permit may operate a commercial motor vehicle only when someone with a CDL valid for that class of vehicle is accompanying them in the front seat of the vehicle.

1.3 Learner Permits

There are other Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act rules which affect drivers. READ THROUGH THESE CAREFULLY. YOUR COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE IS AT STAKE!

- You cannot have more than one license. If you break this rule, a court will fine you a minimum of \$250 (up to \$1,000) and put you in jail for a minimum of 10 days (up to 90 days).
- All states are connected to on computerized system to share information about CDL drivers. The states will check on driver's accident records and be sure that drivers don't get more than one CDL.
- No one can drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle after April 1, 1992 without a CDL. In Tennessee, your CDL must be in your immediate possession. For a first offense, the court may fine you \$250-\$1,000 and put you in jail for 30-90 days. Penalties for second or subsequent offenses will be \$1,000- \$2,500 and 90 days to 1 years in jail.
- Your employer may not let you drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle if you have more than one license or if your CDL is suspended or revoked. A court may fine the employer up to \$500 for breaking this rule.
- Providing any false information on your application for a CDL is considered a Class A misdemeanor for the first offense in Tennessee, People convicted of falsifying their applications will be imprisoned up to 11 months and 29 days, and fined up to, but not more than \$2,500. Their driving privileges will be suspended for not less than one (1) year and no more than two (2) years. Second offense is considered a Class E felony.

You will lose your CDL for at least one year for a first offense, be fined \$250, and be sent to jail for 48 hours if you:

- 1 Drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance such as illegal drugs.
2. Leave the scene of an accident involving a CMV you were driving.
3. Use a Commercial Motor Vehicle to commit a felony.

NOTE: If the above three offenses occur while you are operating a CMV that is placarded for hazardous materials, in addition to the above fine and sentence, you will lose your CDL for at least three years.

- Whether placarded or not, you will lose your CDL for life for a second offense, as well as being fined \$500 and imprisoned for 45 days.

Any driver found to be driving after being placed out of service is in violation of an out-of-service order. The driver is subject to penalty of suspension of their driver's license for a period of one (1) year upon conviction. Drivers whose vehicles are transporting hazardous materials requiring placards are subject to a suspension of three (3) years upon conviction.

1.4 Other CDL Rules

- ***Out of Service Order***

- ***Serious Traffic Violations***

You will lose your CDL for at least 60 days if you have committed 2 serious traffic violations involving a CMV within a 3-year period.

“Serious traffic violations” are excessive speeding (15 miles over the posted speed limit), reckless driving, improper passing, following too closely, and traffic violations arising from accidents or collisions resulting in death or personal injury to any person or property damage, driving a CMV without obtaining a CDL, driving a CMV without a CDL in the driver’s possession, driving a CMV without the proper class of CDL and/or endorsements for the specific vehicle group being operated or for the passengers or type of cargo being transported.

You will lose your CDL for at least 120 days if you have committed 3 serious traffic violations involving a CMV within a 3-year period.

- ***Disqualifications***

If you drive in a commercial motor vehicle when your blood alcohol concentration is .04 percent or more, you are driving under the influence of alcohol. You will lose your CDL for one year for a first conviction. You will lose it for life for the second conviction. If your blood alcohol concentration is less than .04 percent but you have any detectable amount, you will be put out-of-service for 24 hours.

You will lose your CDL for life if you use a CMV to commit a felony involving controlled substances.

Disqualification for railroad-highway grade crossing offenses.

- ***Implied Consent***

If you operate a CMV, you shall be deemed to have given your consent to alcohol testing for the above mentioned violations.

- ***Reporting Requirements***

If you fail to comply with any of these four reporting requirements, you will be fined \$250 to \$500, and be sent to jail for two (2) to thirty (30) days.

These rules will improve highway safety for you and for all highway users.

1. You must give your employer information on all driving jobs you have held for the past 10 years. You must do this when you apply for a commercial driving job.
2. You must notify your employer within 30 days of a conviction for any traffic violation (except parking), which occurred while operating a CMV. This is true no matter where you were driving.
3. You must notify your employer immediately if your license is suspended, revoked, or canceled, or if you are disqualified from driving (before the end of the business day following the day you receive the notice).
4. You must notify the Tennessee Department of Safety within 30 days if you are convicted of any traffic violation (except parking) occurring in any state other than Tennessee, regardless of whether you were driving a CMV or not. To do this, you must obtain the “Notification of Moving Violation” form (SF-0923). This form is available at Driver License Stations or by calling the Department of Safety. You do not need to report convictions in Tennessee, Since they will be recorded automatically by computer.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATORS OF COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES

Every truck and bus traveling Tennessee roadways must meet U.S. DOT safety requirements if it has a gross vehicle rating (GVWR) for more than 10,000 pounds, transports hazardous materials or has a capacity for hauling more than 15 passengers including the driver. In Tennessee, these requirements are enforced by The Tennessee Department of Safety Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division, and include:

- Drivers must be qualified to drive the vehicle being operated.
- Drivers must have a medical card. A medical card can be obtained from a licensed physician after the driver passes a physical examination based on Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (CFR 391.41)
- Drivers who travel outside a 100-mile radius of their work station are required to keep a record of duty status (log book). Drivers who do not exceed the 100-mile radius are required to have a time record kept by their company. All drivers are subject to the Hours of Service regulations.
- Vehicles must be in a safe operating condition as outlined in the Federal motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

Even if you are a private carrier (not for hire), you must meet all U.S. DOT safety requirements and you are subject to inspection by enforcement officers anywhere in Tennessee. All interstate private carriers are also required to display a U.S. DOT Census Number of their vehicles. All for hire carriers are required to register with the Department of Commerce and Insurance (741-2974), provide a copy of their operation authority and proof of financial responsibility (insurance) and by permit stamps for each vehicle.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS,
MEDICAL CARDS, LOG BOOKS OR VEHICLE CONDITIONS,
CALL COMMERCIAL VEHICLE ENFORCEMENT AT
615/251-5197.**

Where To Apply

Applicants for a CDL may apply at any full-service Driver License Station for their knowledge test.

Skills test, however, are administered at only the following eight locations, where you must call for an appointment:

CDL SKILLS TEST CENTERS:

Chattanooga – Bonny Oaks (Hamilton County)	423/634-3127
Columbia (Maury County)	615/380-2548
Cookeville (Putnam County)	615/528-5669
Jackson (Madison County)	901/423-6622
Johnson City (Washington County)	423/926-4911
Knoxville - Strawberry Plains (Knox County)	423/594-6399
Memphis – Whitehaven (Shelby County)	901/543-7920
Nashville – Ben Allen Rd. (Davidson County)	615/532-9780

Remember, as a courtesy to other drivers, **KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT**. If you cannot make the appointment, call the station at least 24 hours in advance so another driver from the waiting list can be contacted.

MORE ON TENNESSEE CDL RESTRICTION CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION
L – Vehicle without Air Brakes Old codes = K, 50	Driver not permitted to drive vehicle with Air Brakes because: • Failed or did not attempt Air Brakes test, or • Used vehicle without Air Brakes for skills test
51 – Intrastate Only	Used for all CDL's issued to a driver under age 21
52 – Gov Vehicles Only	For drivers who are not required to have a valid medical card: primarily government employees.
53 – Intracity Zone Only	For driver who do not meet DOT physical standards but are allowed by FHWA to drive their CMV in a very limited area
54 – Intrastate Only, Medical Limitation	For drivers who are required to meet DOT physical standards, but fail them for vision or insulin controlled diabetes. Can drive only within state of TN and only in intrastate commerce. P & H endorsements not allowed.
55 – Except Class A bus	Issued to drivers with a Class A who also have a P endorsement for Class B or C vehicle
56 – Except Class A and B bus	Similar to above: issued to drivers with a Class A or B when P endorsement applies to Class C vehicle
57 – Except Tractor-Trailer	Added to the Class A only, for drivers who operate a vehicle meeting Class A weight definitions, but vehicle is not a "combination vehicle". Examples: tow trucks pulling vehicle > 10,000 lbs; utility trucks, goosenecks